



NEWS



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SOBERING REALITY: DUI DESTROYS HUNDREDS OF LIVES ANNUALLY

A statewide, grant-funded program hopes to curb impaired driving among Californians

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Every year hundreds of California motorists lose their lives in a collision caused by an impaired driver. Although the numbers have improved from the previous year, in 2009, more than 700 people in the state were killed in a crash where the primary collision factor was driving under the influence (DUI); another 19,805 people were injured under similar circumstances.

“These are more than statistics, they are real people killed in collisions that were entirely preventable,” said California Highway Patrol (CHP) Commissioner Joe Farrow. “Impaired driving is an issue that crosses all segments of society.”

Driving with a measurable blood alcohol content of .08 percent or more for motorists 21 years old or older is illegal in California. In 2009, law enforcement throughout the state made more than 210,000 arrests for driving under the influence (DUI). The CHP accounted for 44 percent of those arrests.

Enforcement alone will not halt this overwhelming problem in California; during the next several months, the CHP will conduct a grant-funded public education and awareness program with a focus on educating drivers about the dangers of DUI and the devastation it causes. The “*Designated Driver Education Program*” grant will fund the production of public service announcements; educational materials will be also produced and distributed statewide.

“Nobody ever thinks it’s going to happen to them. They think it happens to other people,” said Commissioner Farrow. “Anytime an impaired motorist is on the road, not only do they put themselves at risk, they’re putting the lives of everyone else around them in danger.”

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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